LT. F. W. Loops
484th Sqdn., 336 Bomb. Gp.
Avon Park, Fla.

AVON PARK, FLA.
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Mr. & Mrs. Charles E. Loops, Jr.
907 Chowan Ave.
Lynchburg, Virginia

Thursday night
Feb. 18, 1943

Dear Kids -

"And how the hell are you"?, to use a bit of colloquialism! That's the way we usually greet one another. - Either that or a bit of warped radio procedure we picked up in Lubbock, to wit: - "don't go ahead until I say, 'go ahead', 'go ahead"! - I know - we're all nuts. - so don't worry too much about us.

Thank Janet for my nice valentine. - I've got it hanging under her picture. - so now I can prove she's my girl friend! It certainly was an appropiate one she picked out. - You're sure she did it all by herself?

So Lester is in Melbourne - eh. - The first day I flew in a B-26 we went over there. - Tho I haven't even been near the east coast of Florida since - except up Jacksonville way. - Yesterday we were supposed to fly formation to Daytona Beach + back. - There is a WAAC camp there and we were going to buzz em so low they'd think we were coming right in - but no - we just fooled around in general and ended up by going over the camp here at about

50 feet! - Upon landing there was a message awaiting the flight leader from the Colonel! After the Col. got thru "racking the Lt." back - he told him - which it wasn't to be done again - it did look mighty pretty!.

We have regular combat missions now. We make cross countries, drop bombs, - and sometimes go out over the Gulf for target practice with the machine guns. You should see the old shells ricochet up off the water. - 'Course you can only see the incendiary ones - but I mean they scat! It's lots more fun when you have definite missions instead of just flying around.

I guess you knew I had been transferred to the 480th Sqdn. - I was sent up there as a copilot - with the assurance I'd be checked out with a plane of my own either before I left this country or immediately upon getting to the battle zone. - Today I was transferred again to another crew. - and I'm glad. - This friend of mine - a 1st Lt. - is my first pilot. - He graduated in 1941 - and has about 1500 hrs. He has been an instructor, flown gliders, - and Douglas D.C. 3's along with Lockheeds. - He came in here and checked out on the B-26 faster than anyone else ever has at this field! I feel quite honored that he should have asked for me to be his copilot. - He will check me out and

the hints + tricks I can pick up there his experiences will be irreplaceable. - if you know what I mean.

The only thing about being with Lt. Buchert is his eagerness for combat. - Boy, - if I stay with him - I'll see combat duty twice as fast as I would other wise. - But as I have no other choice, anyhow - I'd much rather be going into it with him + his experience than with one of our own group with no more experience than I.

And I'd no longer been assigned to his crew when the fire-works blew up! - Don't tell the folks this - cause there's no need to worry them until everything is definite - but. - today we were "alerted". That means one of two things - we are either to go across somewhere - very soon - or else up to a torpedo school - and then for awhile - and then across. Of course - everything could be changed + called off over-night - but. - - - - - well, - in the Army we fast learn never to cross our bridges until we come to it. - so for this reason if no other, - there's no use worrying the folks until the time comes - so please don't mention it to them in any way.

It's too bad you folks don't live in Greenville anymore. - Quite a few folks make trips up there from here - right now we are working up one to D.C. or Phila. - The only nut is that we probably wouldn't be able to stay but a few hours

before coming back to Florida.

I've been saving magazines with pictures of different planes I've flown.- The other night I cut 'em out.- Don't know why- but thought you might like to have 'em.- I've lost the ones I had of primary and Basic- but here are the AT 9's and AT 17's (also known in any circles as C-78's) and the B-26's.- Start a fire with 'em when you finish or you might send 'em home!-

Gotta stop now- to let me hear from you and <u>mums</u> the word.-

Love
Frank

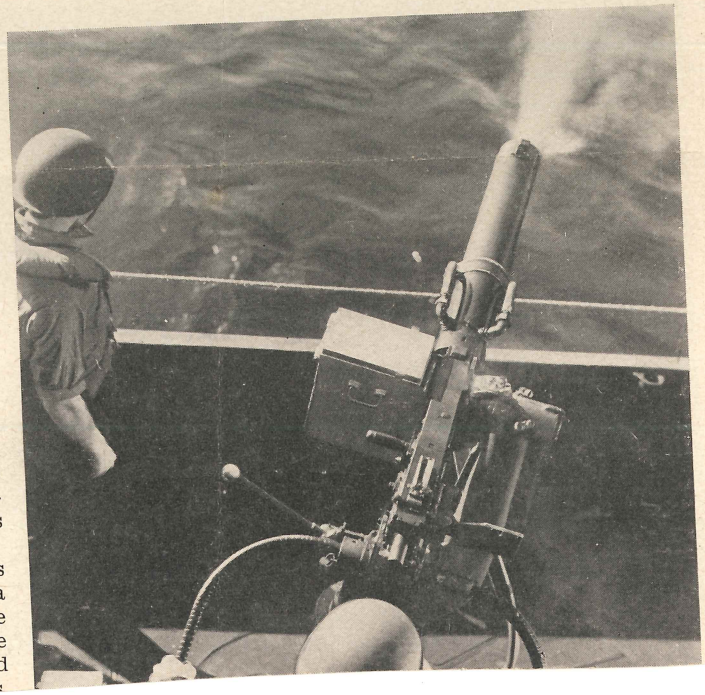
P.S.- Here's an old Cadet insignia I had saved. Thinking Janet might like it.- Why,- is beyond me!

L-4

HANDLEBARS attached to a .50 caliber antiaircraft machine gun make firing the weapon seem much like riding a bucking motorcycle at high speed over a bumpy road. The photograph at the right, taken on a patrol vessel somewhere on the Pacific, shows a steel-helmeted Coast Guardsman in action.

As compared with aiming by a shoulder rest, the handlebar grip is said to be less fatiguing to the gunner, since the bars absorb some of the vibration of the gun. It also allows better leverage and freer sweep for following fast-moving planes across the sky.

The trigger mechanism is operated by means of a squeeze grip on one of the handles, just as the throttle of a motorcycle is controlled by one of the rider's hands



RECOGNITION POINTS

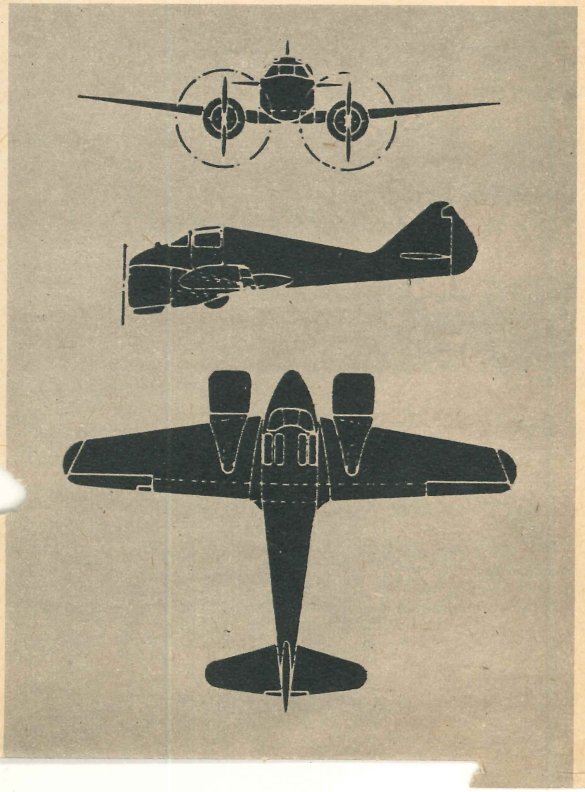
A. Low wing with slight dihedral, Curtiss filets, marked taper on leading edge.

B. Underslung nacelles with radial cowlings extending forward to fuselage line.

C. Fore section of fuselage very broad, short nose parallels engine nacelles.

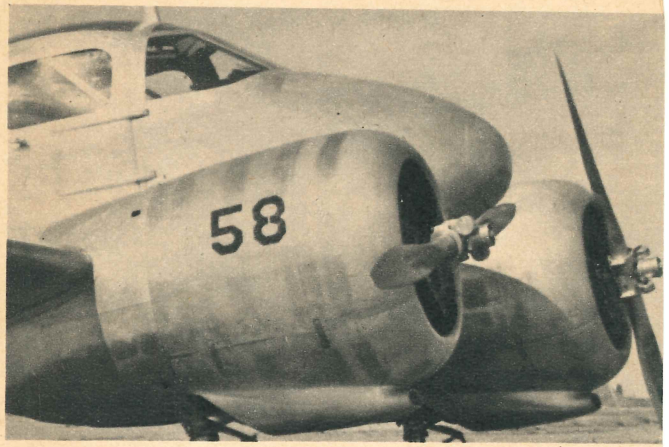
D. Single tail with large swept-back fin, small elliptical rudder, equi-taper on tailplane leading and trailing edges.

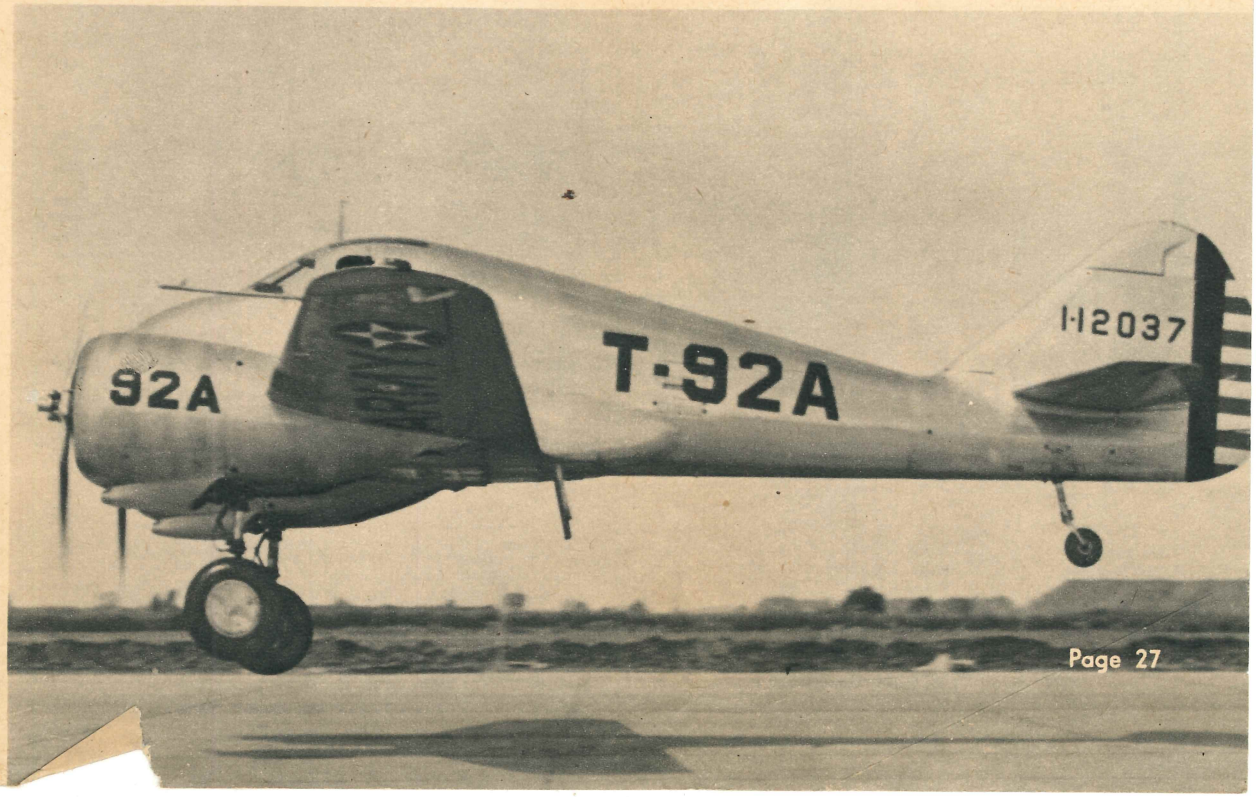
NACELLES PARALLEL NOSE

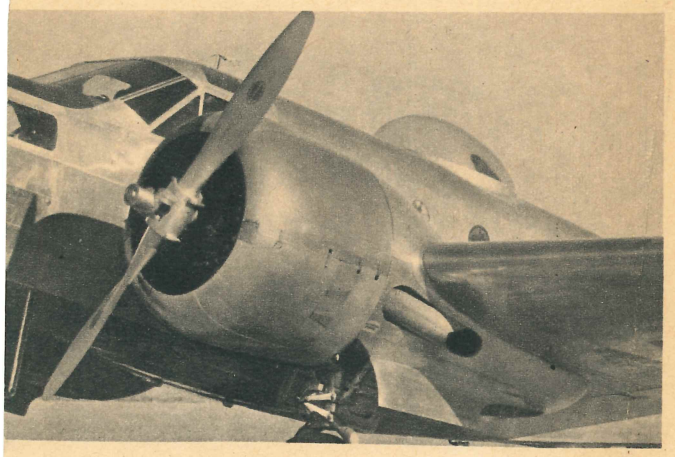


2 CURTISS AT-9

Developed specifically for the training of potential multi-engine pilots and co-pilots, this is the most secret of all transitional trainers now being produced in quantity for the Army. Powered by two 280 hp Lycoming engines, it has sufficient speed, ruggedness, and instrument complexity to simulate combat characteristics of American bombers. A two-place design, with side-by-side seating, it has provision for two additional seats for specific training purposes.







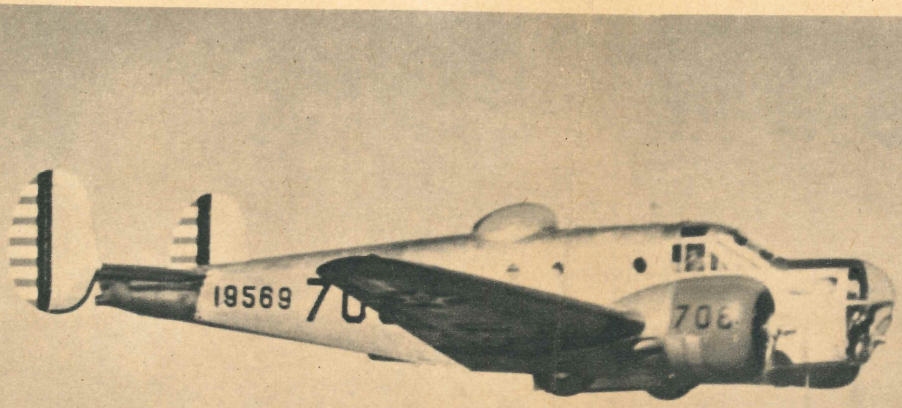
4 BEECH AT-11

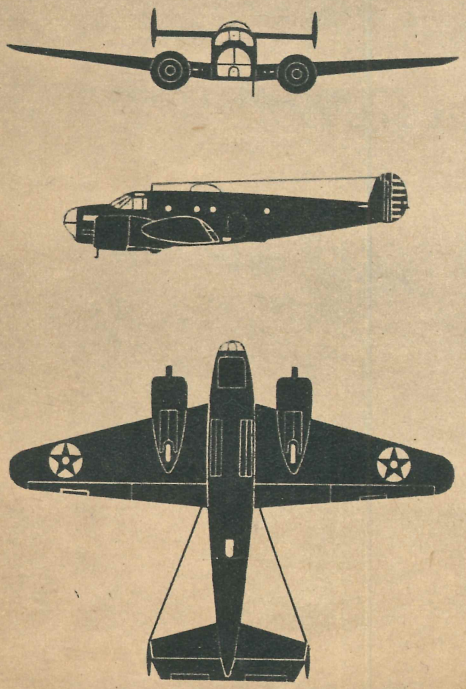
Generally similar in appearance to the AT-7 and commercial Beech Model 18S, this plane is distinguished by changes in nose and inclusion of turret for training of bombardiers and aerial gunners. Powered by two 450 hp Pratt & Whitney Wasp engines, it has speed estimated at slightly over 200 mph, depending on training load. It is 34 feet, 3 inches long, 9 feet, 5 inches high, and has a wing span of 47 feet, 8 inches. It carries a crew of three or four.

RECOGNITION POINTS

A. Low wing with marked dihedral, equi-taper leading and trailing edges, round tips.
B. Inset nacelles, radial cowlings, concave taper on nacelle top, bottom, and sides.
C. Fuselage tapers sharply to tail on bottom. Transparent turret above wing trailing edge.
D. Twin tail with high vertical surfaces, swept-back fin, rounded rudders, straight trailing edge on tailplane.

TURRET ABOVE TRAILING EDGE





RECOGNITION POINTS

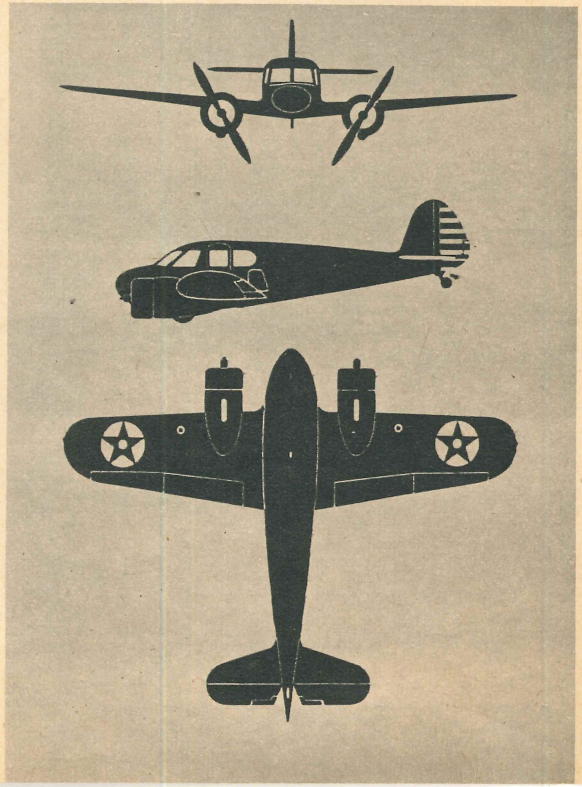
A. Low wing, slight dihedral, marked taper on trailing edge, slight taper leading edge.

B. Underslung nacelles, no taper on sides, radial cowlings.

C. Cigar-shaped fuselage, equal taper on top and bottom.

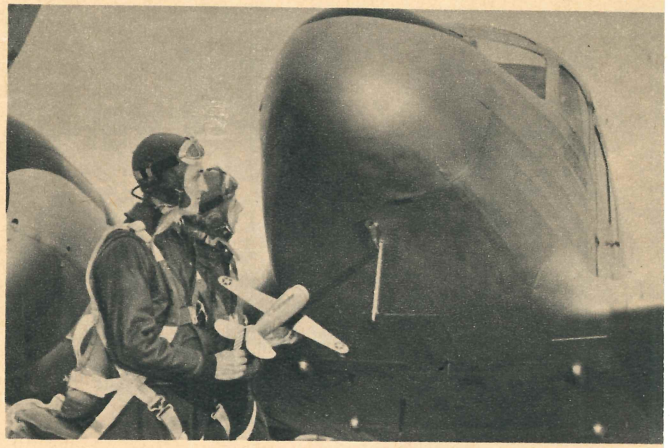
D. High single tail, elliptical fin and overhanging rudder, tapered stabilizers, straight elevator trailing edge.

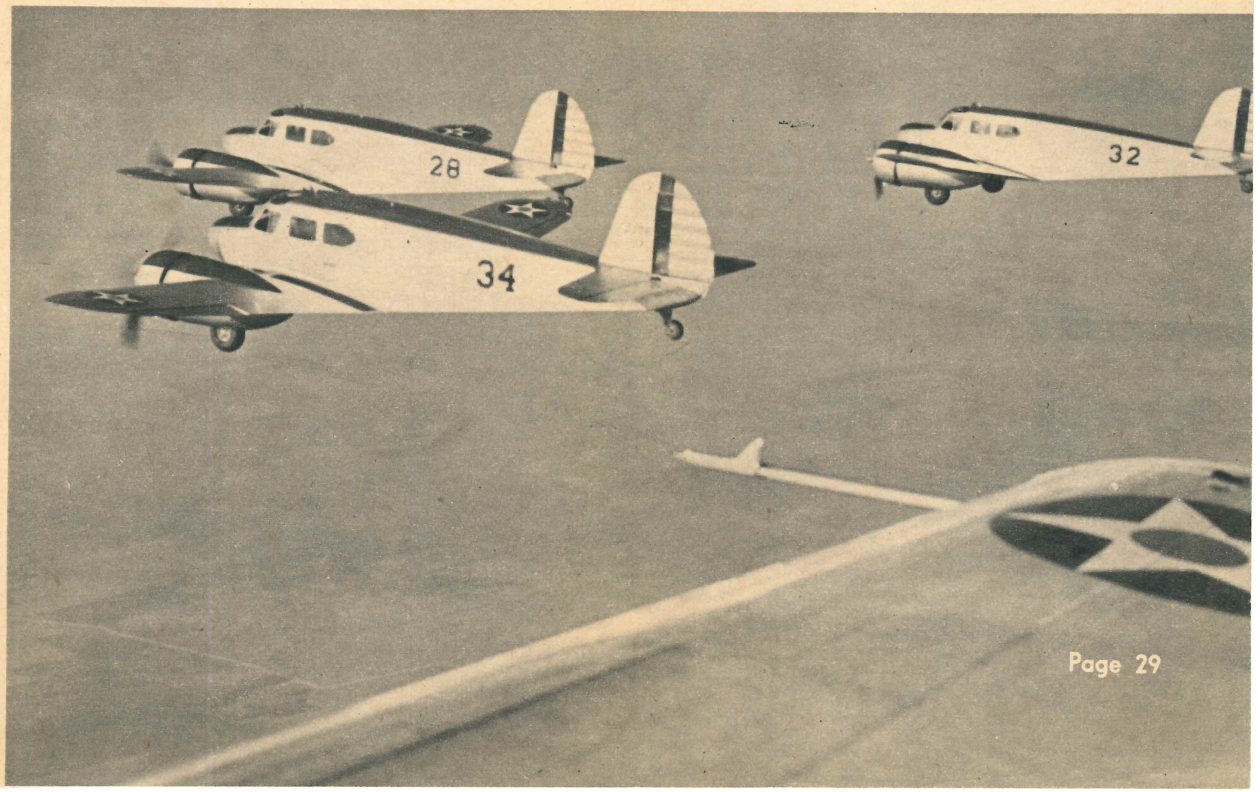
LARGE SINGLE TAIL

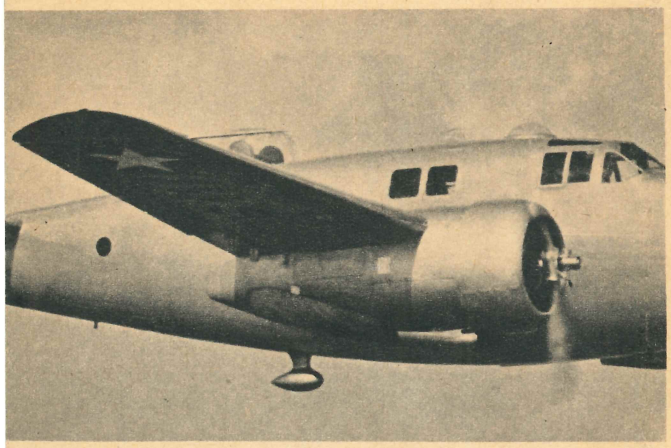


6 CESSNA AT-17

Closely resembling the AT-8 and developed from the same prototype, the commercial T-50, this plane is used only by the U. S. Operational changes to suit different training purpose and a change in engine give it slightly different performance characteristics. It has an initial rate of climb of 1,525 feet per minute, cruising speed of 195 mph at 7,500 feet, lands at 55 mph with flaps. A five-place ship with dual controls side-by-side, it is used for navigation training.







8 FAIRCHILD AT-13

The ultimate in plane designs using a minimum of strategic materials, this twin-engine trainer, which debuted several months ago, was made possible by the Duramold process. It is the largest all-wood plane to enter Army service, measuring 37 feet, 7⅜ inches in length, 13 feet in height, with a wing span of 52 feet, 6 inches. An all-purpose crew trainer, it has accommodations for pilot and co-pilot in the cockpit, bombardier in the nose, radio man, turret gunner.

RECOGNITION POINTS

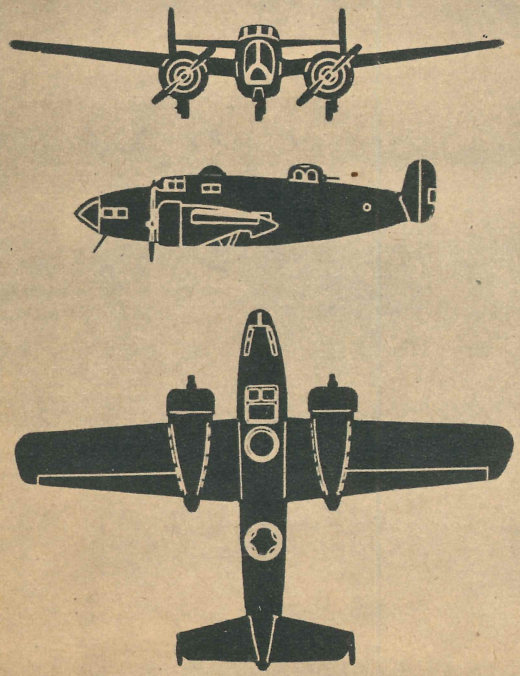
A. Mid wing with marked dihedral set far back, equal taper leading and trailing edges.

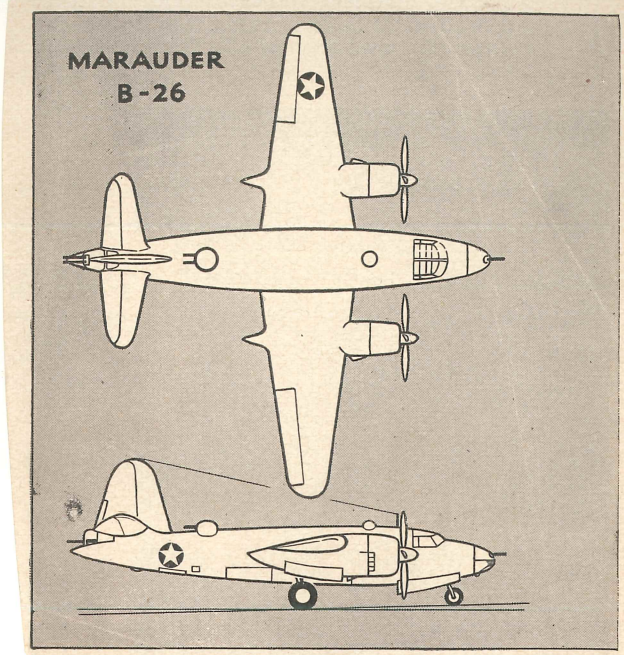
B. Underslung nacelles, radial cowlings, nacelles extend beyond wing trailing edge.

C. Long fuselage with little taper, navigation hatch, top turret aft of wing trailing edge.

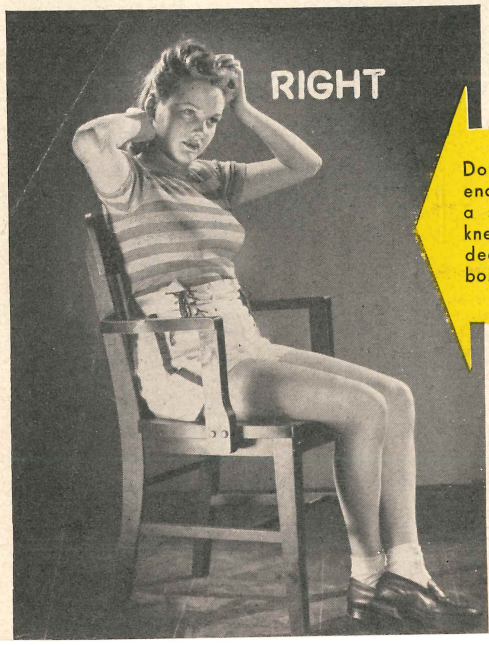
D. Small twin tail, slight taper on fin and rudder, high tailplane position.

MIDWING FAR BACK




MARAUDER
B-26

making, however, is the ability of these operatives to keep working long hours, day after day, without loss of efficiency. Inten-



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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT OUR FIGHTING PLANES

POWER PLANT
2 2,000-HP.
PRATT & WHITNEYS

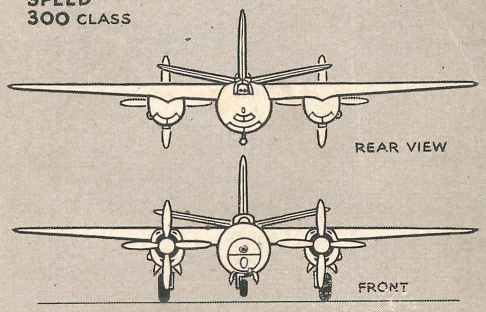
SPAN
65 FEET

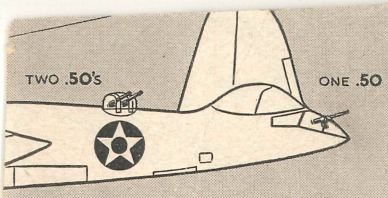
LENGTH
58 FEET, 3 INCHES

HEIGHT
19 FEET

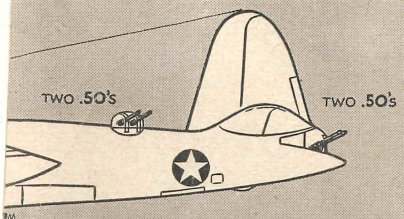
WEIGHT
26,625 POUNDS

SPEED
300 CLASS

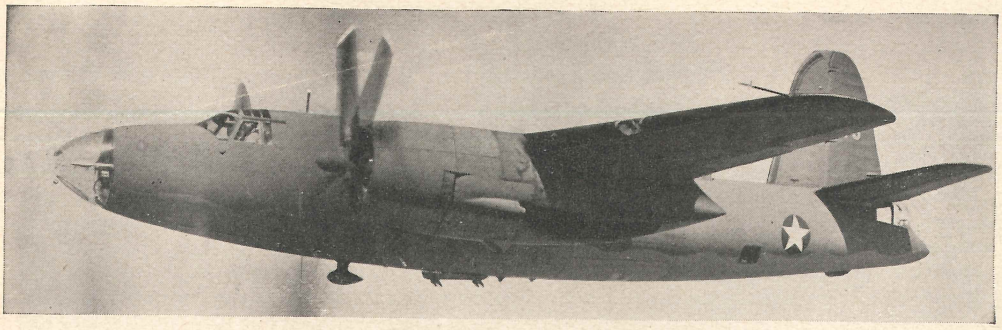




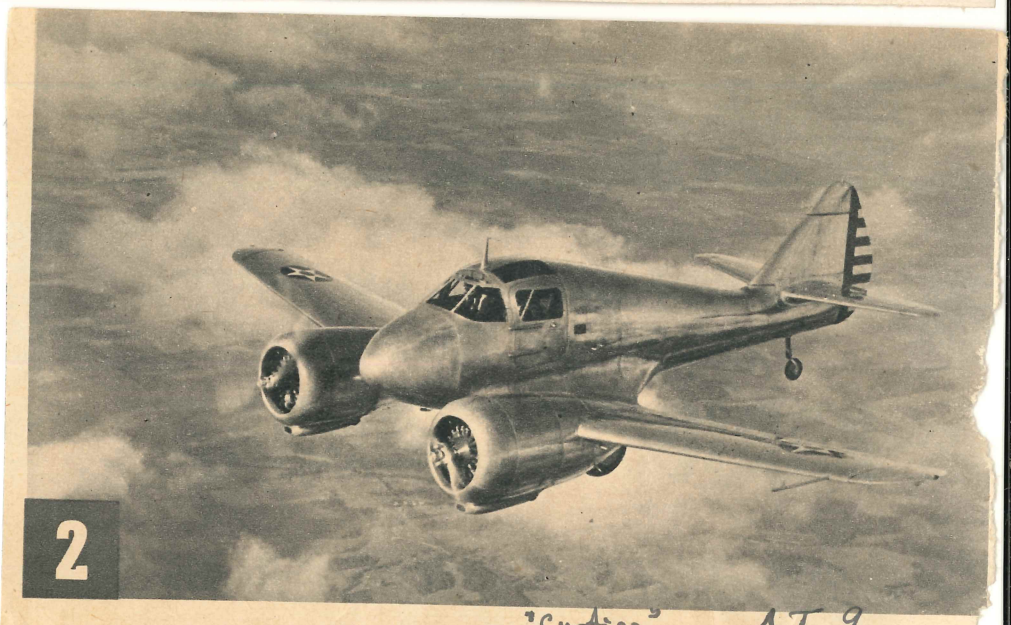
designers believed that its high speed
War experience brought a change . . .



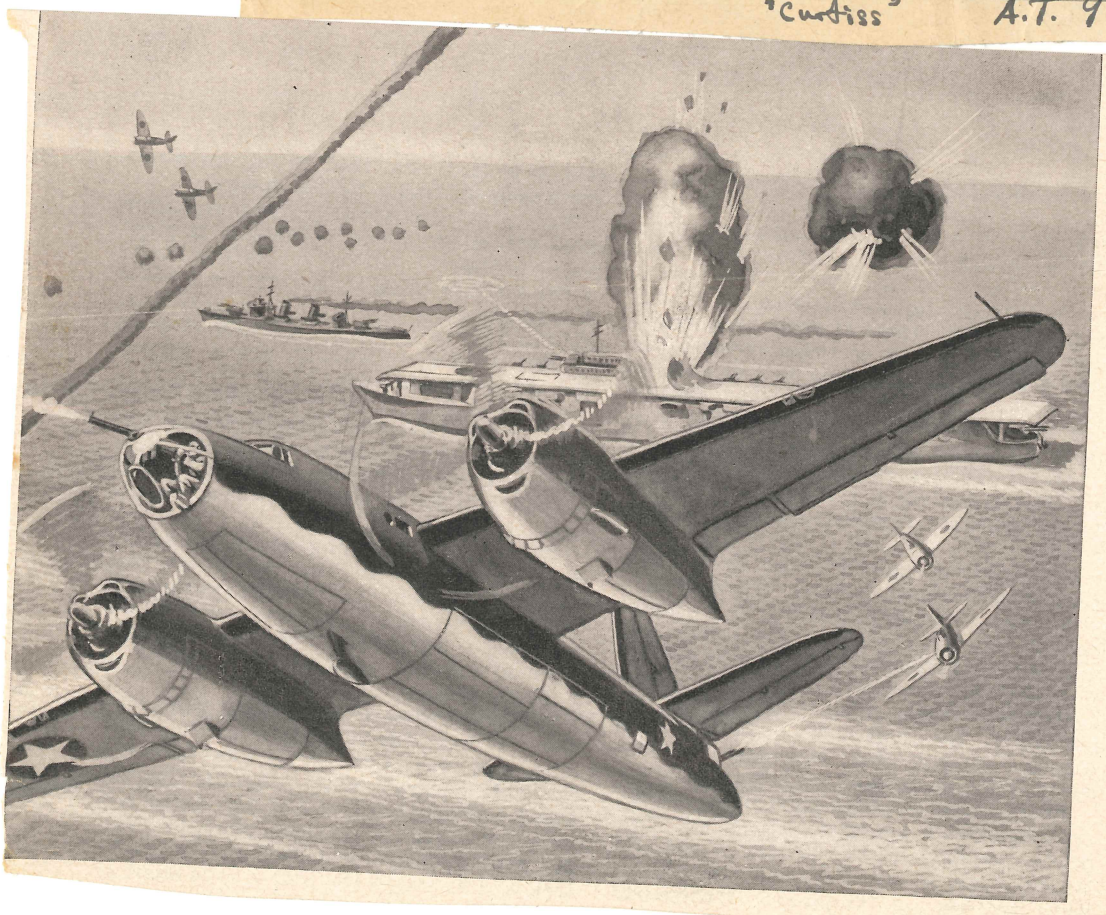
Other guns may be added to those shown
rack on the underside of the fuselage

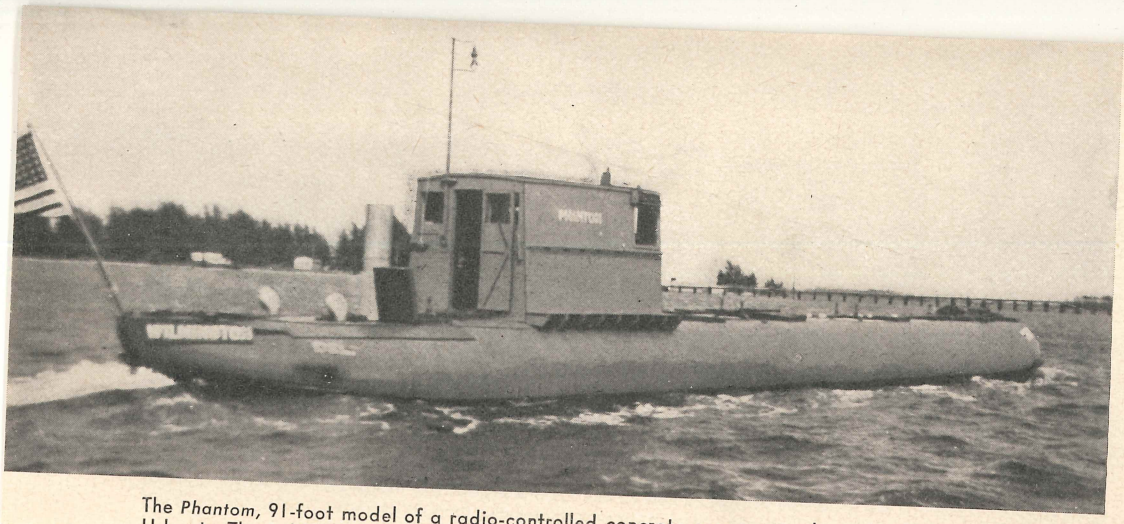


In its specifications for the B-26, the Army seemed to ask for the impossible—and got it. Defying most of the orthodox ideas of warplane design, the Marauder was one of the longest chances in aircraft building



"Curtiss" A.T. 9





The *Phantom*, 91-foot model of a radio-controlled concrete convoy vessel proposed as an answer to the U-boats. The cabin is a temporary structure for the crew of two that took her to Washington for tests

Aviation Will Soon Have Another Skilled

RADIO TECHNICIAN

tion against the enemy fighter opposition.

The bid for an airplane of this type went out to the nation's manufacturers. The Glenn L. Martin Company in Baltimore took the proposition under consideration and asked the engineering staff to submit proposals in the form of three-view drawings. Several sets of sketches were sent in. They were set up for study and disccussion before the entire staff. Then iron-haired, steel-eyed Glenn L. Martin walked in, surveyed the half-dozen proposals and, after a couple of minutes, pointed to one. "That's it!" He picked out a proposal set forward by the brilliant nonconformist, Peyton Magruder.

Some of the engineers who studied the Army's demands had asked, "When do they want this miracle passed?" The general opinion, at first, was that the Army was asking for the impossible. That was all that was needed. It seems that the Army's current motto, "The difficult performed immediately, the impossible takes a little longer," started with Magruder and the specialists who worked with him.

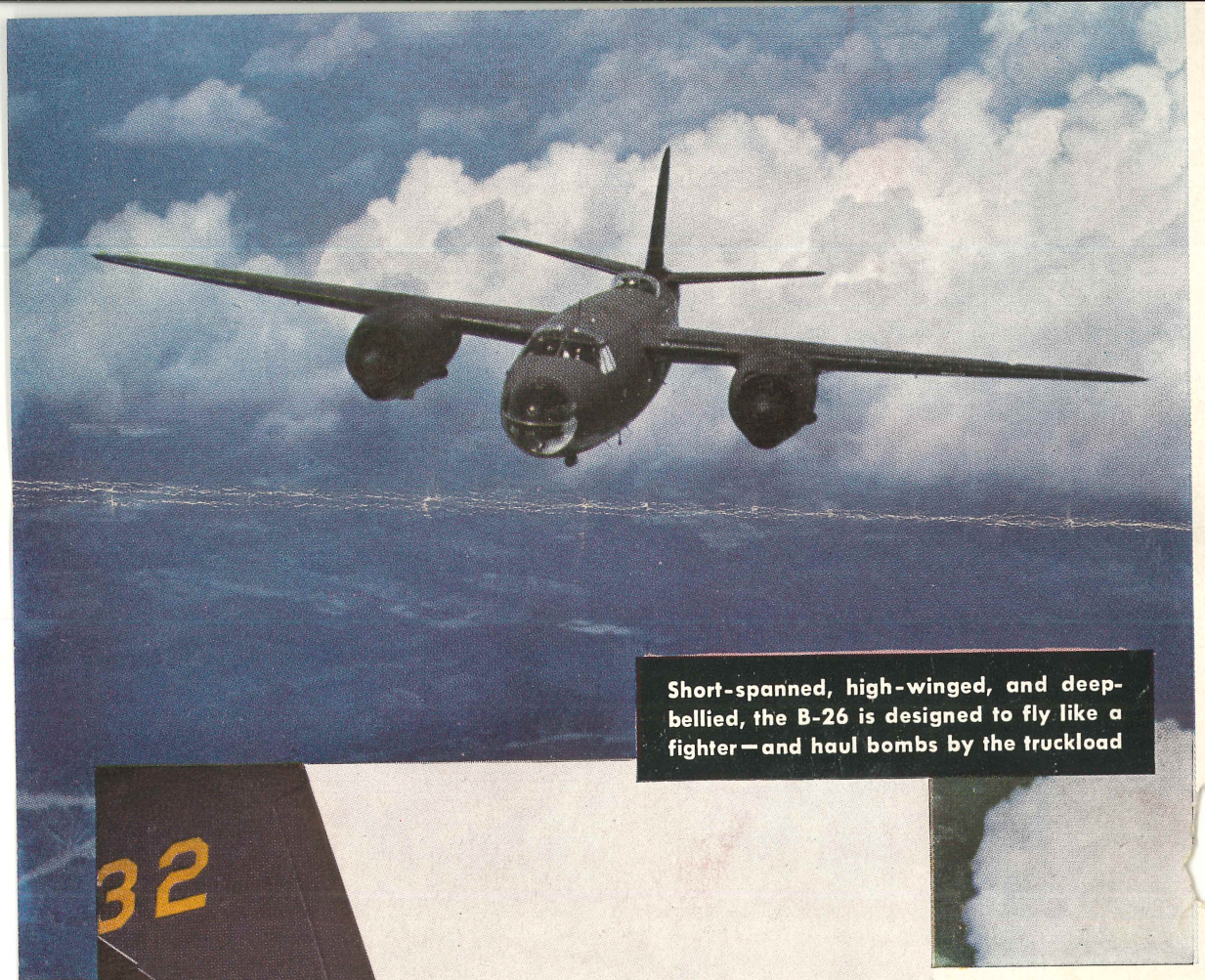
Most men would have gone about picking up where their predecessors left off. Ma- in a ship that size, then defied the structures men to design for his theory.

For three weeks the project engineers lived within the limits of the Martin plant near Baltimore, driving a drafting crew to the verge of collapse as events in Europe showed more and more the desperate need for this kind of airplane—a ship that could fly like a racer, maneuver like a fighter, and lift a truck's load.

The proposed bomber was exactly what most people thought Magruder would trot out. Short-spanned, high-winged and deep-bellied, a closed-course racer built big, packed with the latest radical ideas on airplane design.

There was no fussing about peacetime production frippery. The first B-26 that came off the line was the pilot model and full-scale prototype in one. Behind it stretched a production line. The B-26 represented the longest chance ever taken on a single design.

The first Marauder appeared in November 1940. It had a span of 65 feet, was 58'3" long, and was powered by two 1,850-h.p. Pratt & Whitney Wasp engines. Its top speed was above 350 m.p.h. The prototype,



Short-spanned, high-winged, and deep-bellied, the B-26 is designed to fly like a fighter—and haul bombs by the truckload

Two .50's in the tail give the Marauder a murderous sting. The first, lightly-gunned B-26 had only a single gun in this spot

FROM the big transparent nose of the Martin Marauder, the bombardier aims the .50 caliber machine gun that guards the bomber from head-on attack. (Kodachrome by Hans Groenhoff)